

Questions and Answers from the Grants Workshop

Are there any major changes to the programs from last year? No. The application form, the attachments, and the project rating system are slightly different, but overall, the programs are the same.

What is the status of the Bond Bill? The bond bill is under review by the Joint Committee on Bonding, Capital Expenditures, and State Assets.

How does a community deal with donated funds? Funds that are donated for a project should be given to the community and put into a dedicated account specifically for that project. Since we can only reimburse on a town or city check, donations must be given to the community.

Is it important to check the box for both the PARC or LAND grant and the LWCF grant? Checking the box for both PARC or LAND and LWCF allows an applicant to be eligible for both programs. Please note that each grant has different procedures, requirements, and criteria.

When is the Commonwealth Capital application due? The FY09 Comm Cap application is due on August 15, 2008. Please see www.mass.gov/commcap for more information.

Can you submit the FY08 Comm Cap application score? No. You must complete an FY09 Comm Cap application to be eligible for the 30 points.

What sort of expanded outreach is necessary for public meetings in an Environmental Justice neighborhood? If your project is in an EJ neighborhood, outreach must be done in the languages of that neighborhood – this includes the advertisements for the meetings, having translators at the meetings, and making sure that the outreach is done in non-traditional formats, such as foreign language newspapers.

When do project costs incurred become eligible for reimbursement? As soon as you have a signed contract back from the Commonwealth, costs incurred from that date on are eligible for reimbursement.

When can approved project designs be sent out for construction? Approved project designs can be sent out for construction at any point. However, you will not be reimbursed for incurred costs until July 1, 2009. We recommend that construction bids be out and approved in time for a July 1 start date.

Can a community apply for more than one grant? Yes.

Can contributions be taken from the land owner? Yes, but again, this money must be donated to the municipality to be eligible for reimbursement.

How long does it take for the contract package to be returned to the municipality? Once we have the signed contracts and other documents required to start a project, they are turned around by our office within two weeks (or so).

Is the \$500,000 cap per project or per community? Per project.

What are the expectations for grant applications that were previously submitted? The expectation is that the community fills out a new application form and submits a new package and that they not just resubmit what was submitted before.

How many grants were approved last year? There were 47 USH applications last year, 22 of which were funded. There were 22 SH applications, 21 were funded.

Can CPA money be used for the community's portion of the grant costs? Yes. CPA funding can be used.

When do appraisals need to be submitted? Appraisals must be submitted by July 15.

When purchasing a CR, if there are structures on the property, do they need to be appraised? Not in all cases. For example, a lean-to or teepee, may not require an appraisal.

How do you access the Environmental Justice data viewer? Click on <http://maps.massgis.state.ma.us/EJ/viewer.htm>.

Are Small Town PARC applications in competition with all the other PARC applications? Yes.

How detailed does the draft Open Space and Recreation Plan need to be? The public participation process must be completed and residents' priorities must be included and all chapter must be included, even if they are not fully completed.

If the purchase price is less than the \$750,000, but the appraisal price is more, does a community still need to get a second appraisal? No.

How are points divvied up on the rating system? The rating system is included in the application package.

For a playground project, does the deed have to specify that it is for recreational purposes? Yes. If the deed doesn't currently state that, a city council or town meeting vote can be taken that rededicates the land. This vote can be filed as an adjunct to the deed. If the deed does not specify that the project is for recreational purposes a city council or town meeting vote can be taken and field as an adjunct to the deed that rededicates the land.

For a PARC project, must the community provide a deed that they own the land? Yes.

If the community is purchasing a CR, can they co-hold the CR with a non-profit? That would be fine.

Does a community applying for a CR have to do a Baseline Report? No.

What happens if a community did not submit their vote to DCS for approval? They should submit the vote that was taken for our approval. If it is deemed to be incomplete, then a new vote will have to be taken.

Can a community applying for a PARC grant strictly for construction funding and not both design and construction? Yes.

Can a community start construction before July 1, 2009? A community can start construction before then, but the work that was done before they have a signed contract with the state will not be eligible for reimbursement.

Do we require a management plan for final reimbursement? Yes.

Is a greenway that is being built on an easement eligible? As long as the community has control over the property for perpetuity, yes.

Can land dedicated for park purposes be rededicated for conservation purposes? Most often this is fine, but the determination is case specific.